

# What to Do When Your Plans for Your Calling Fall Through

Deep in our hearts, we all want to live for a purpose bigger than ourselves.

This concept can be described as many different things—God’s leading, our heart’s desire, or conviction—but I describe it as “God’s call.” It answers the great question of why we do what we do.

When we receive God’s call, the job begins, and we have to work out that call with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12). As the great old hymn says, we must “trust and obey.” If we want to please God, there is no other way.

As we progress through life, we have many assignments from Him. As we prove to be trustworthy, He gives us bigger and bigger assignments, but we still have one primary call in life. All of these assignments are impossible without God. We will fail in the attempt unless we trust Him to do what He wants to do through us.

The Apostle Paul is a great example of a believer following God’s call. Shortly after Christ lived on earth, Paul (known then as Saul) lived and worked in Judea, where, as a high-ranking Jewish official, he worked to eradicate Jews who believed that Jesus Christ was the Messiah.

He’d overseen the execution of many Christians, including the first known martyr, Stephen (Acts 8:1), and was proud of his work. But on the road to Damascus, where he was planning to flush out more Christian “rebels,” he received God’s call (Acts 9). He immediately left behind his immoral and sinful work and pursued a career that would glorify God.

Barnabas eventually brought Paul to Antioch, where he was

called to go on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:2). Despite his prior status as an official, Paul willingly took the role of junior partner to Barnabas. But early in that first missionary journey, he faced the devil head-on and led his first convert to the Lord. He then preached the doctrine of justification by faith for the first time.

Paul followed this pattern for the next 10 years through his missionary journeys, where he wrote much of the New Testament. He fulfilled his call through great adversity and much fear and trembling, but God always provided what he needed to accomplish what he had been called to do. God does not do any less when He calls us today.

All assignments and calls of God are holy. They are also specific and unique. Mary was called at 15 to be the mother of our Savior. Moses was called at 80 to lead the nation of Israel out of Egypt. Paul was in his 40s when he was called to go on the missionary journeys.

Calls are made to men and women of all ages. For some, the call will last a lifetime. For others, it's a stage of life, and then they move on to a new calling.

Our job is to bloom and flower wherever God has placed us. Paul's plans for his missionary journeys probably didn't involve incarcerations, beatings and other public humiliations. But his faith held firm when his plans didn't, and in Scripture, we see him glory in the opportunity. We see him pray and sing praises at midnight, lead people to Christ and baptize them and model great principles and insights for us to be effective Christians in the 21st century.

Paul's prison epistles (Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians) were written in extremely difficult situations, but they have wonderful insights that can be of great help to us today when we face difficulties. Paul was so focused and committed that he was able to rejoice from his prison cell in Rome and even

send us encouragement to do the same when he penned these words in his letter to the Philippians, “For me to continue living is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21). {eoa}

*This piece is adapted from Robert Mitchell’s book A Walk in the Market, copyright 2013 by Milestone Publishing House.*

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